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8. — *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, adapted to North America, with a view to the Improvement of Country Residences, comprising Historical Notices and General Principles of the Art, Directions for laying out Grounds and arranging Plantations, the Description and Cultivation of Hardy Trees, Decorative Accompaniments to the House and Grounds, the Formation of Pieces of Artificial Water, Flower Gardens, &c., with Remarks on Rural Architecture, illustrated by Engravings.* By A. J. DOWNING. New York : Wiley & Putnam. 8vo. pp. 451.

THIS is an attempt of a kind somewhat novel in the United States. Mr. Downing, inspired by his ardor for the more general diffusion of taste in embellishing country dwellings, has endeavoured, and as we think with much success, to bring within small compass, and yet in an elegant form, all of the information most important to be had for the end in view. The disposition to improve and adorn the grounds immediately around houses in the country, is rapidly extending itself in America. But it is very much checked by the want of practical guides, by means of which there shall be some security afforded to individuals with moderate resources, against the misapplication of their money and labor. The English works, which are to be found in great variety, and some of them very splendid, are worse than useless in many respects upon this side of the Atlantic ; for they are predicated upon a state of society and manners, a climate, an extent of private fortunes, and a scale of prices of labor and materials, so wholly different from what is known here, that any luckless wight who ever commenced operations upon the faith of what he read in them, must have had occasion before he ended, to repent in more ways than one of his misplaced confidence. Almost every citizen of the United States, when he begins to improve land, has to deal with nature in some of her primitive forms. He finds every thing before him to be done, and the cost of labor with which to do it very great. Hence, it often happens, that he has expended a considerable sum without realizing any thing further from it, as yet, than an opportunity to expend more to advantage. He finds this nowhere set down in the estimates of the old world, where no such work is necessary ; and he becomes discouraged from doing more. What he sees put down as within the compass of a moderate fortune in England, turns out to require a large one in America. He loses confidence in all estimates whatever, and, in order to save him-

self from ruin, stops where he is. The consequence generally is, that he loses the advantage of much of his preceding outlay ; that he gets disgusted with country life ; finally sells what he has done for a quarter part of the amount it has cost him, and returns to a city determined never to leave it ; or, if he does, only for a jaunt to some watering place during the hot weeks of the season.

Yet after all, it is very easy to adorn the lowliest country dwelling without incurring much cost, provided only the disposition be found to exist in the mind of its tenant. There is no country, where the opportunity and the inducement unite together in a greater degree than among us. Our lands are generally in the hands of an independent class of citizens, who own them free from incumbrance, but who own not much else. A trifling amount of annual labor, is all that is necessary to make the difference at home, between a bare and desolate hovel, and a pretty farmhouse. A few overgrown currant bushes in a formal row before the house, which have been left to take care of themselves ever since they were set, half a dozen wild apple-trees in their natural roughness, and here and there perhaps a single cherry-tree, constitute all the horticultural improvement of many of our most ancient interior towns. A few hours, but too often spent at the tavern fire-place in political wrangling, would suffice to put a new face upon the scene. The apple-trees might be made to return money into the pocket of their owner, and his neglected currant bushes might afford space for a few additional plants, the cultivation of which would soften and expand his own mind, in the same ratio that it improved the appearance of his home. His wife and children, taking the benefit of his example, could daily contribute without effort their mite to the general effect, and thus would grow, out of a neglected and repelling spot, a cheerful and inviting scene. To do all this, little is necessary beyond the will of the individuals concerned. Yet how many are there all over the United States, men and women, who have never realized the possibility of such a conception, and who think all the use of the earth to be, that it yields corn and wheat and potatoes, all the beauty of a house that it is a shelter from the weather !

We wish that there was in America, a more decided taste for country life among the younger portion of those classes, favored by fortune with the possession of property. It would have a tendency in some degree, to counteract the restlessness and disposition to change, which is characteristic of our people, and to check the passion for luxuries of all kinds, which is rapidly extending itself with the increase of our public ho-

tels, and the facilities of transportation from place to place. One of the greatest supports to the fabric of society, as it is erected in England, is the landed interest; by which we mean, that class of proprietors who live upon their estates, and sympathize with all their neighbours poor or rich, and to whom the idea of removal from the place which they call home, is in the nature of a heavy calamity. In the United States there is no such class. The wealthy have made their property for themselves in cities, and to most of them a country house is necessary, because it is commonly regarded as an appendage to the condition of a man of fortune, and for no other reason. It is seldom considered in the light of a permanent possession, or more than a place to spend three or four months of summer. No rural tastes are formed, no sympathies with neighbours are created. The citizen remains as a citizen all his life, and his country residence at his death is sold, and passes into other hands without the perpetuation of a single memorial that such a man had ever dwelt in it. The great majority of persons who make country seats, do so either because they desire to make a display of their fortune, or else because they have a romantic idea in their mind of the delight of a beautiful retreat from the bustle of the world. Neither motive will answer for any length of time, to keep them living there. The desire for display rapidly palls with the possession of all that is necessary to indulge it, and the fancy for retirement gives way before the dreariness of solitude. Let no man of property seek a country place, unless he is inclined to attach himself to the soil, to make his children feel that it is theirs as well as his, and to cultivate a common interest with all his neighbours.

Mr. Downing treats of different modes of building houses for the country, in a simple and perspicuous manner. His remarks upon the prevailing taste for Grecian temples as models for such houses, are perfectly just. There can be nothing more absurd. We do not understand him as going quite so far in his condemnation of Gothic architecture. Both kinds seem to us equally inappropriate, but for different reasons. The first, because it is converting what was meant for a religious monument into a dwelling-house, the second, because it is transferring to a new country a peculiar style of building, without transferring the only association of ideas which can make it pleasing. The Gothic in America strikes us as being gothic indeed. There are but two styles of architecture from which our countrymen should borrow, the English and the modern Italian. From these Mr. Downing has shown, that it is very easy to obtain models in every conceivable va-

riety. Possibly some hints could be obtained by a study of the Oriental, although it is better calculated for a hot climate than for ours. Yet on the whole, we are inclined to believe that there is great room open for the genius of native architects, to devise and to combine new forms particularly adapted to manners in America, which will unite external beauty of proportion with internal convenience and economy.

Mr. Downing has much to say of the various sorts of trees, and of their respective effects in the formation of landscape. This is a subject that has as yet been little studied in America. Trees are to an artist who lays out grounds, what colors are to the painter. He shows his skill by the combination of shades of color and forms, in such a manner as to develope out of a given quantity of surface, the greatest practicable beauty. The cultivation of trees for any other purpose than for fruit is in its infancy with us. A few individuals pay some attention to exotics, simply because they are rare and expensive, and notwithstanding that they have not a thousandth part of the elegance or durability of our native forest trees. It is this taste which has introduced the Lombardy poplar, the horse-chestnut, the lime tree, and the mountain ash, in preference to the white oak, the shell-bark walnut, and the sugar maple. These are trees that require a century of growth, it is true, and therefore no single generation can expect to enjoy in its own time, the advantage of seeing them come to perfection ; but if that is to be an argument why they should not be planted, every generation will be forced to go without them. We repudiate such selfish notions. Although one man may cease to live, and his children may lose the benefit of what he has planted, still somebody will probably be the gainer. And his act will be attended with an increasing degree of merit, in proportion as the woodman's axe extends its destructive ravages in our native forests. The first growth of the Atlantic States is now very nearly gone; and New England, one of whose chief supports is her navigating interest, will not fail to rank high among her benefactors, those who provide against the contingency of her want of ship-timber. Even considered as a money speculation, he who should plant a few barren acres with forest trees, would most probably realize for his children a far more solid fortune than if he were to enter government lands at the minimum price. And he would be doing a more useful and creditable service by superintending their cultivation, than if he wasted his time as many have done in devising visionary schemes of great wealth from the timber lands already existing.

There is also much valuable instruction in this book upon the subject of making hedges, laying out gardens, ornamental

bridges, walks, shrubberies, &c., communicated in an agreeable style, and illustrated by frequent quotations from those poets of various countries, who have sung the delights of rural life. Mr. Downing evidently brings to his task, much more than the mere requisites for making a book about gardening. He is an enthusiast, as well as a practical artist, in his profession. He speaks of effects to be produced from given causes, not from what he may have read of them in books, or seen in pictures and highly-colored engravings, but from personal observation and experiment. The consequence is, that such advice as he can give is worth having. It is the result of experience in the climate of the Northern States, and does not come from Great Britain, whose climate is so wholly different, that a large class of plants may there be cultivated in the open air, notwithstanding the high latitude, any attempt to rear which here is time lost, and money thrown away. The great object in the United States ought to be, to concentrate results of the knowledge already obtained of the effects of the climate, in such a manner as to save useless labor, and to direct the efforts of individuals to the most certain ends. And this object, we think Mr. Downing's book exceedingly well calculated to promote.

For the rest, the mechanical execution is very handsome and does credit to the press of New York. The designs and illustrations are neat and appropriate. They make the volume an ornament to any drawing-room. There are more typographical errors in it than such a work ought to have, considering that nothing but a little extraordinary care is necessary to avoid them. This is a common fault in American printing, and grows out of the impatience of minute labor, which is a national characteristic. But that great progress has been made in correction of the evil, may readily be seen, by comparing the books now published in the United States with those which were issued thirty years since. There is, however, yet room for improvement, and we trust American publishers will not relax their efforts, until they shall habitually produce specimens of correctness, fully equal to the best publications of the countries of Europe.

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9. — *Remarks on Currency and Banking, having Reference to the Present Derangement of the Circulating Medium in the United States.* By NATHAN APPLETON. Boston : Charles C. Little & James Brown. 8vo. pp. 73.

THIS is a pamphlet of no ordinary importance. The subject is an absorbing one, and we desire to express our obliga-